

## **Scottish Ballet announces first innovative, immersive conference that explores the mental health and wellbeing of young people through dance**

- **The Moving Minds Conference is being held in person in Glasgow 4-5 May 2022, and online on Friday 6 May 2022**
- **Developed in partnership with SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health)**
  - **Led by a youth advisory panel**

Scottish Ballet's Moving Minds conference, which is being organised in partnership with the SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), will examine how therapeutic dance can help young people look after their wellbeing in the face of a growing mental health crisis. The immersive conference attendees' which include healthcare professionals, arts and health specialists and education professionals, will listen to presentations, discuss, and network with other practitioners and take part in movement-based workshops. The aim of the workshops is to upskill practitioners who work with movement and mental health and enable them to experience the benefits that young people get from one of Scottish Ballet's workshops, which will also help improve their own wellbeing. The performances, workshops and presentations will take place throughout Scottish Ballet, Tramway, and the Hidden Gardens, and there will be pop-up, small scale performances at various places in the building.

The Moving Minds youth advisory panel has been instrumental in developing the programme and members of the youth panel will speak and lead sessions at the conference. The conference will be opened by a performance of a new dance piece by 16 company dancers, and members of the Youth Exchange, which has been commissioned by Scottish Ballet and created by Madeline Squire. The conference will be a collaborative event with young choreographers from across the UK who will stage their work and participate in discussion panels with contributions from One Dance UK, People Dancing, and the Sonia Sabri Company.

**Jill Sonke, Research Director, Center for Arts in Medicine at University of Florida** comments, “The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) first ever report looking at the evidence for arts and health in 2019 highlights the growing recognition of the importance of the arts to health and wellbeing. I am delighted to be speaking at the Moving Minds conference. Scottish Ballet is driving a leading edge in making the arts an integral part of the promotion of physical, social, and mental wellbeing for people of all ages, including young people.”

Research shows that 10% of children and young people (aged five to 16) have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, around three in every class.<sup>1</sup> There are currently almost 12,000 young people waiting to receive support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and around a quarter are rejected by the service. Nearly 2000 of those have been waiting for over a year. Exploring non-medical interventions which can be prescribed more quickly, should be considered as part of the overall management of mental health problems in young people, as this could reduce pressure on the NHS.

**Dr David Caesar, Emergency Physician and Senior Strategic Advisor, Scottish Government** says: “The benefits of social prescribing have been well established. With the significant increase in mental health problems among young people, a holistic approach to the management of the mental health of young people is required which includes medical and non-medical interventions. Arts on prescription including dance programmes have been shown to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people.”

Social prescribing is an approach that connects people to non-medical sources of support or resources in the community to promote good mental health and is an important tool to help people manage their mental health.<sup>2</sup> There is significant evidence for the benefits of social prescribing in improving symptoms in people with long term medical conditions, including people experiencing mental health challenges. The Alchemy project, which used dance as a form of early intervention in young people at risk of experiencing psychosis, found that at the end of the programme, the dance programme delivered clinically significant results. The young people who participated had a ten-point increase in their mental wellbeing according to the WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales).<sup>3</sup> The WEMWBS scale measures mental wellbeing in the general population and evaluates projects, programmes and policies which aim to improve mental wellbeing.<sup>4</sup>

The benefits of arts on health and wellbeing has been acknowledged in the Creative Health report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. The report found that the arts including dance can help people experiencing mental health problems and can save money in health and social care.<sup>5</sup> With the significant increase in young people experiencing mental health problems, which has been compounded due to the pandemic and lockdown, long term strategies are necessary to address this. A recent survey of almost 2,500 young people by the charity Young Minds found that 67% believed that the pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health.<sup>6</sup>

“Scottish Ballet is committed to developing strategies and resources to support the mental health of young people through our ground-breaking Safe to Be Me™ programme. The Moving Minds conference gives us the opportunity to learn directly from experienced practitioners and young people about the mental health challenges they face and how dance can help them,” says **Catherine Cassidy, Director of Engagement at Scottish Ballet.**

Scottish Ballet's work off stage is as world renowned as its work on stage and it has partnered with several groups to deliver its projects including Dance for Parkinson's, Time to Dance for people with dementia and their carers and Elevate™ for multiple sclerosis.

The Moving Minds Conference is being held in person in Glasgow 4-5 May 2022, and online on Friday 6 May 2022, with tickets starting from £55 per day and early bird booking discounts available. The conference features presentations from leading experts in mental health; arts and health and wellbeing; and young people. For more information about the conference and to book a place, please visit: <https://www.scottishballet.co.uk/moving-minds>.

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**Notes to editors**

**About Scottish Ballet**

- Scottish Ballet, founded in 1969, is Scotland's national dance company. Based in Glasgow, the company performs regularly across Scotland, throughout the UK and internationally – promoting Scotland's pioneering spirit far and wide.
- Under CEO/Artistic Director Christopher Hampson, Scottish Ballet presents bold, adventurous performances rooted in strong classical technique, accompanied by the Scottish Ballet Orchestra. The company's broad repertoire includes new versions of the classics and ground-breaking commissions on stage and screen.
- Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement programme, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, promoting confidence, fostering wellbeing, and encouraging creativity through dance.
- SB Health is supported by Baillie Gifford, with a funding commitment for the next five years for the neurological programmes Dance for Parkinson's, Time to Dance (dementia), and Elevate™ (multiple sclerosis).
- Alongside Baillie Gifford, SB Health is supported and funded by The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Life Changes Trust, R S Macdonald Charitable Trust, The Rayne Foundation, The Robertson Trust, Graeme & Sue Sloan, Ed and Jean Murray, Jane Britten, The Ideas Fund (funded by the Wellcome Trust and managed by the British Science Association), Baring Foundation, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE), The National Lottery Community Fund, The Spifox Foundation, Walter Scott Giving Group and the British Council alongside anonymous patrons.
- Scottish Ballet's Moving Minds Conference has been developed in partnership with SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) and has been funded by The Baring Foundation.
- Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

### **About SAMH**

- Around since 1923, SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) is Scotland's national mental health charity.
- Today, in over 60 communities we work with adults and young people providing mental health social care support, services in primary care, schools and further education, among others. These services together with our national programme work in See Me, respect me, suicide prevention and active living; inform our policy and campaign work to influence positive social change.

- Visit [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk) or follow @SAMHTweets, SAMHmentalhealth on Facebook and samhscotland on Instagram for more information.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Children's Services Coalition. Mental Health. Available at: <https://www.thescsc.org.uk/campaigns/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-camhs/>.

<sup>2</sup> Friedli L, with support from Vincent A, Woodhouse A, McCollam A. Developing Social Prescribing and Community Referrals for Mental Health in Scotland. Edinburgh: Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health; 2007.

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/3000/https://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/924/0054752.pdf> (accessed February 2022).

<sup>3</sup> The RSA. The Alchemy project: a synopsis. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/perf-arts-network-film-synopsis---the-alchemy-project.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Warwick Medical School. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales – WEMWBS. Available at: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>.

<sup>5</sup> APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. Creative Health. The arts for health and wellbeing. Available at: [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing \(culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk\)](https://www.all-party-parliamentary-group.org.uk/all-party-parliamentary-group-on-arts-health-and-wellbeing/)

<sup>6</sup> Young Minds Survey. The impact of Covid-19 on young people with mental health needs. Available at: [Covid Impact On Young People With Mental Health Needs | YoungMinds](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-minds-survey/).